

School: Children's School Kindergarten

Philosophy:

- lab school based on theories and research in Developmental Psychology
- aligned with the guidelines set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for developmentally appropriate practice
- six learning goals; self-esteem & independence, interaction & cooperation, communication, discovery & exploration, physical capabilities, and artistic expression & appreciation
- focus on individualized approach emphasizing clear expectations and cooperation within consistent structures

Admissions Criteria:

- children must turn five by December 31, 2008
- children with fall birthdays will use the program as a pre-K and then go to kindergarten at an elementary school
- a non-refundable fee of \$50.00 with application
- admission is based on space availability, with preference first given to siblings and then by date of application
- parents give written consent for their children to participate in all laboratory aspects of the program, including research being conducted by members of the Psychology Department
- for children new to the school, admission requires both a written teacher evaluation and a school visit (though no formal assessment is conducted)

Staff:

- administrative team includes a director, an assistant director, and an administrative coordinator
- kindergarten team includes two teachers and one assistant teacher
- teachers and administrators have many years of experience in education, bachelor's degree and often an advanced degree in early childhood education, psychology, or a related field.
- continued professional development (90 to 100 hours/year), plus direct connection to research
- communication with families via email and monthly newsletters

Program:

- teachers use the six objectives as a flexible framework for planning learning experiences to promote the growth of each individual child via a process oriented approach
- continuum of developmental objectives reflects understanding of young children's natural developmental progression
- teachers prepare an engaging center-based learning environment for exploring a theme, such as birds, artists, or transportation
- Monday - Thursdays from 8:30AM to 2:30PM and Fridays from 8:30 to 11:10AM (September through May)
- supplemental activities include weekly cooking and gym classes
- optional summer camp program in June (one to four weeks, 4 hours per day)

Diversity:

- school strives to recruit a diverse student population, both ethnically and socioeconomically, to provide an enriched learning environment, a diverse subject pool for research, and broad experiences for psychology students and student teachers

Resources:

- spacious classroom suite with large playground
- maximum class size of 24 with staff ratio at all times of 1:12 but most times 1:8
- shared kitchen and children's library facilities
- use of Carnegie Mellon campus (gym, track, field trips to campus post office, etc.)
- materials and snack fees used to provide school and classroom resources chosen by the teaching team
- cooperation and collaboration with therapists when necessary, but no in-house special services
- security system with video surveillance

Family Impact:

- participate in family activities (open house, family festival, graduation)

- join family committees (library, school pictures)
- meet with teacher to share information about the child's school and home life
(parent meeting plus fall and spring conferences)
- tuition, material and snack fees - by semester, two semesters in a school year
- bus service may be provided by school district of residence

Philosophy

- Discipline
- Abstract vs. Concrete Experiences
- School Policies
- Standardization vs. Individualization
- Competition vs. Cooperation
- Academic, Social, and Physical Goals

Admissions Criteria

- Age Cutoff
- Grades Available (K-8, K-12)
- Readiness Assessment Used

Staff

(teachers, aides, administrators, counselors, etc.)

- Leadership / Vision
- Individual vs. Team Teaching
- Who Plays What Roles?
- Handling Special Needs
- Teacher/Student Ratio
- Connection to Current Research
- Training
- Communication with Families

Program

- Required vs. Elective Courses
- Nature of Assessment
- Mixed Grouping vs. Ability Grouping
- Courses Offered / Curriculum
- Social Skills/Values
- College Admissions Record
- Separate Subjects vs. Themes across Subjects
- Reaction to Student/Parent Input and Concerns
- Emphasis on Independence, Cooperation, Creativity, and Critical Thinking

Diversity *(staff and students)*

- Gender
- Economics
- Race & Culture
- Religion

Resources

- Class Size
- Classroom Size / Atmosphere
- Supplies
- Library
- Referral for Special Services
- Cafeteria
- Safety
- Tutoring / Gifted or Special Education Support
- Gym, Auditorium
- Technology
- Playground, Playing Fields
- Neighborhood Resources
- Financial Aid

Family Impact

- Tuition & Fees
- Distance from home to school
- Schedule
- Transportation
- Parent Participation in the School